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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/841,654	04/24/2001	David Morris Hamilton JR.	TH2038 (US)	6431
7590	10/03/2002		EXAMINER	
Yukiko Iwata Shell Oil Company Legal - Intellectual Property P.O. Box 2463 Houston, TX 77252-2463			PRICE, ELVIS O	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1621	
			DATE MAILED: 10/03/2002	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/841,654	HAMILTON, DAVID MORRIS
	Examiner Elvis O. Price	Art Unit 1621

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-49 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-49 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some
 - c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>2,3,4</u> .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-49 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-49 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kharitonov et al. {U.S. Pat. 5,110,995}.

Applicants claim a process comprising: continuously contacting, in a distillation column reactor comprising a reaction zone and a distillation zone, benzene with a zeolite catalyst effective to hydroxylate benzene and an oxidant at a temperature in the range of from about 100 C to 270 C thereby producing a hydroxylated product, wherein at least a portion of said benzene being in a liquid phase; continuously separating said hydroxylated product from the unreacted benzene in the distillation zone under conditions effective to vaporize said unreacted benzene and maintain said hydroxylated product in a liquid phase; and recovering the said hydroxylated product from the distillation column reactor.

Kharitonov et al. teach a process for producing a hydroxylated aromatic compound (phenol) from the oxidation of an aromatic compound (e.g., benzene) with an oxidation catalyst (a zeolite catalyst) and oxidant (nitrous oxide) (see Example 1). The oxidation catalyst used in the Kharitonov et al. invention is made of high-silica zeolites

of various structural types such as ZSM-5, ZSM-11 and BETA (Col. 3, lines 46-68 and Col. 4, lines 1-9), which contain iron and can contain at least one element of periods 2, 3, 4 or 5 of the periodic table (Col. 3, lines 46-54). The selectivity of the hydroxylated aromatic product (phenol) is as much as 100% (see table 1 and 2), and the separation of the hydroxylated product from the un-hydroxylated product is carried out using conventional distillation techniques (Col. 5, lines 10-12). The difference between the presently claimed invention and the Kharitonov et al. reference is that the Kharitonov et al. reference teaches a temperature range from about 275 C to 450 C and is silent about the reaction pressure of their process.

However, the presently claimed temperature of about 270 C is sufficiently close to the temperature of about 275 C taught by Kharitonov et al., such a difference in degree would not be rendered patentably distinct from the prior art. Additionally, since Kharitonov et al. are silent with regard to pressure the skilled artisan would have expected that standard atmospheric pressure is being employed in the process of Kharitonov et al. Thus, the presently claimed process would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elvis O. Price whose telephone number is 703 605-1204. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am to 5:00 pm; Mon-Fri.

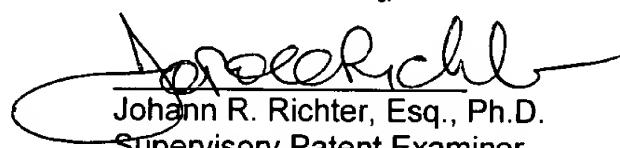
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Johann R. Richter can be reached on 703 308-4532. The fax phone

numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703
308-4556.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or
proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308-
1235.

Elvis O. Price, Ph.D.

October 1, 2002


Johann R. Richter, Esq., Ph.D.
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1600